1:Lipkind E-5 (1937) 1948 SP9 Caraja SP9

THE CARAJÁ[1]

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TRIBAL DIVISIONS AND TERRITORY

The *Carajá* are a river people who since pre-Columbian times have held as the central portion of their territory the inland Island of Bananal, which is formed by the great fork of the Araguaya River (lat. 8°–17° S., long. 48°–52° W., map 1, *No. 1*; see Volume 1, map 7). They must be regarded as an independent linguistic family for the present; their language displays no convincing similarities to any other recorded South American language.

The term *"Carajá"* is used to designate the entire people as well as the largest of the three tribal divisions; the other two are the *Shambioá* and the *Javahé*. The *Carajá* proper have 20 villages on the western or main branch of the Araguaya River, widely spread from Leopoldina south of Bananal clear down to the end of the Island. The *Shambioá*, now nearly extinct, have only two villages left, a little way below Conceicão. The eight villages of the *Javahé* lie on the eastern or minor branch of the Araguaya River and on the small streams within Bananal. The general location and the relative sizes of the three groups have remained the same since the earliest times.

The native names give some notion of intergroup attitudes. All three groups regard themselves as a single people and use a name meaning "we" to distinguish themselves from other tribes. The *Carajá* proper are called the "great people" by the other two groups. The *Shambioá* are the "companion people." The *Javahé* are called by a name which is used generally to mean "Indian" and bears the pejorative connotation "backwoodsman" or "hick." There is a possible analysis which makes it the "old people" but, even if this etymology is correct, the word no longer has that meaning.

Dialectical differences are slight and other differences not very great, with the *Shambioá* occupying a middle position culturally between the other two groups. This account is based on field work with the *Carajá* proper and refers to the other groups only where they exhibit important differences.

[1] The present description of the *Carajá* is based on the author's field work during 1937, done under the auspices of the Department of Anthropology, Columbia University.

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302 The bristly or wavy black hair of both sexes is cut off straight above the eyebrows and hangs down in back over the neck. Dandies [301] wear a part about three centimeters wide up to the crown /Fig. 1 appears here/, let the short crown-hair stick up like a brush, and with cotton strings tie the part hanging down in back into a braid, at the roots of which the men sometimes tie a decoration of blue arara or black mutum /curassow/ feathers (ušiktamaru).

301 In the pierced ear-lobes both sexes wear sticks of cane 15-20 [304] centimeters long for everyday.

The plug in the lower lip (anʒõõ) is used only by the men. It [824] consists of the light, flaky wood of the piuva tree and is either cut obliquely with a short point or runs out into a long, thin lamina hanging down on the chest (Fig. 2, b /see p. 18/).

Boys primarily wear, instead of this, small T-shaped pieces of shell (idžã) (Fig. 2, d /see p. 18/).

The most precious lip ornament, which is worn only on festive occasions, but otherwise is kept carefully wrapped in cotton, is a long, heavy, stone plug (manuterẽ) of hyaline or rose-colored quartz, the T-shaped end of which is stuck through the lower lip while the conical button hangs down (Fig. 2, a /see p. 18/). Of the four specimens in the collection the largest is 17.5 centimeters long.

301 /11/ These lip stones, of which only a few have reached
439 European collections, are not made by the Karaya themselves, but are bartered from the Tapirapé, the Tupi people on the like-
[135] named left tributary of the Araguaia. The mountain chains of the left riverbank, such as the Serra dos Cayapos, are rich in this material. A Kayapo stone plug acquired in S. Maria is shorter and runs out to a tapered, blunt end (Fig. 2, c /see p. 18/).

304 Tattooing is limited to the tribal badge which both sexes
●619 wear on their cheeks: a blue ring 10-15 millimeters in diameter (aũʒamanurẽ) just under the lower edge of the orbit.

515 On the whole the Karaya are distinguished by scrupulous care of the body. They bathe several times a day. Their hair is
302 always carefully combed. All the hair on the face and body is
[417] plucked out. Shears are now commonly used for hair cutting,
[237] whereas formerly piranha teeth were used for this.

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101 Their neighbors are therefore the following:

In the south, Kayapó and Bororo, the latter known to the Karajá only by name.

/188/ In the west on the Rio das Mortes, the Chavánte, in Karajá: klĭũ̆zą́ (kĭlŏ̆zą́, kŭl̆ĭ̆zą́); on the Rio Tapirapé, the Tapirapé, ũ̆hṹ; from Santa Anna northward, the Kayapó, klą̄ą̆ṹ.

In the east, on the upper Tocantins, the Cherénte, ĭnŏlą̄́tŭ; on the south end of Bananal, the so-called Canoeiros, tĭą̄bĕ̆zą́; in the middle of Bananal, the Šavajé, šą̆wą̆jé, (i)šą̄(n)dĭwą̆ndŭ́.

In the north, the Šambioá: šą̆mbĭŏą́.

Of the tribes with whom they were unacquainted, the dõbą̄ĭ́ were mentioned on the Rio das Mortes in the east the ĭšą̆wŭndą̆hṍ.

648 The Karajá live on a war footing with all these tribes, except for the related Šavajé and Šambioá; they show great fear [439] of all of them. They formerly carried on trade with the Tapirapé, but for five or six years the two tribes have avoided each other as a result of a feud which flared up between them because of the • 619 kidnapping of women by the Karajá. The Karajá show great respect even before the two tribes related to them. This is prob- [162] ably due to the fact that the Šavajé and Šambioá live in a few large villages, whereas the Karajá are scattered in many small settlements, and that they therefore, unaccustomed to great crowds of people, are afraid of the imposing number of armed men. Apparently, fear of other tribes is customary among the Indians generally.

162 The tribe of the Karajá is at present divided into two hordes:
361 The north horde lives from the northern end of Bananal
622 Island to the Rio das Mortes in the following 14 fixed villages (from north to south) (1): village of the chief Wą̆lą̆tą́, Cri-ŏtĕ́,

1. By fixed villages I mean those that are again established in their particular district after each rainy season with the move to the river sandbanks again.

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[619] The tribal tattooing, which is characteristic of both sexes, consists of two small blue-black circles about 1.2 centimeters in diameter on /Ills. 50-52 appear here/ the cheeks below the eyes (Pl. 14; 16). As the name for this there was given: ŏděmă̤lūl̤i, ŏděmă̤li̤lŭ, ŏdemărĭnĭ. The tattooing is executed in the following manner: With a /219/ stamp (wālĭŏnă = tobacco pipe) made of aruera wood (kūwăŏ) the circular line is pressed into the cheek with a slight turn of the sharp, circular edge of the stamp (Ill. 52a), so that it remains visible for a long time (1).

1. Ehrenreich brought back a stamp made of the stem of a bottle gourd (teśiă, Berlin 3913).

Ill. 53.
Chief's tattooing. a) man. b) woman.

Any splinter of a smashed flint stone, which is newly made each time, serves as a knife. It is not further worked, but rather one simply selects a pointed, sharp splinter (Ill. 52b shows four such stone splinters smashed by the Indians and said to be suitable). With these stone knives (mănādjŭ = stone tooth), the circle is now cut out about two millimeters wide, the wound washed out with a wet cotton cloth, and then genipa juice is rubbed in, which soon takes on a blue-black coloring. Allegedly the wound is supposed to heal in two days without festering, but in the case of Mauzí, on whom the tattooing had been cut only recently, I noticed that the upper edges of the circle were slightly swollen. When the tattooing is still new, it is deep, has sharp edges, and has a very dark color. With age it forms a scar, gradually becomes entirely flat, and the color disappears. In a village of the north horde I also observed a man with red-colored tattooing.

[881] The tattooing is incised with the onset of puberty, namely, between the ages of 12 and 14. I occasionally, however, found

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191 general, they pronounce Brazilian words badly; they seldom succeed in pronouncing f correctly, usually they say p for it (păcõ for facão, žípre for chifre, părinã for farinha, păsér for facer).

126 For the list of words and texts recorded by me, along with the translations, see the appendix I and II /untranslated: see the foreign text, pp. 415-482/.

18. Myths.

793 Myths were told me by two persons: Chief Cadete Chico of
126 Schischá told me the creation myth; I obtained a second version
115 of this, as well as all the rest, from Kurišť. Usually he told them the most vividly and in the greatest detail the first time, and considerably more simply in repetitions. Some features had to be verified by much questioning, if they were overlooked in the first notation. When questioned, Kurišť said that he was telling the myths as his mother had told them to him. According to this, the myth seems to be handed down through the mother among the Karajá. To me it was surprising that he professed not to know any of the myths reported by Ehrenreich /345/ ("Beiträge," pp. 39-44), with the exception of the howling monkey myth. Apparently they were truly unfamiliar to him. This is all the more surprising since he is the grandson of Pedro Manco, Ehrenreich's informant, and thus should have known about the store of myths preserved in this family.

793 The Karajá regard the Furo das Pedras as their original home.
619 There the ancient Karajá lived under water. They regard the
825 Šavajé and Šambioá as their tribal kinsmen. Animals are regarded
821 as beings like human beings, so that transformations of human beings into animals and the reverse play an important role. They think of the stars as inhabited by creatures who temporarily came to the earth and there came into contact with human beings.

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166 Schischá, the deceased chief Pedro Manco, and Mother Joana from the migratory camp No. 9, people about 60-70 years old, are regarded as the children of the immigrant Šavajé. Recently, Šavajé again came from Bananal to Schischá; in October 1908 they lived in a separate house. These Šavajé, of course, entered into frequent alliances with the Karajá.

167 [101] A third branch is supposed to have separated from the Šavajé on Bananal, apparently in the previous generation. This horde crossed the Araguaya and moved toward the west; among the Karajá of the Araguaya they are regarded as lost. The separation took place in the region of the mouth of the Rio das Mortes or somewhat more to the south.

• 619 Before I enter into a discussion of the culture of the Šavajé, I should like to report very briefly what the Karajá told me about them: The Šavajé are their kinsmen, they speak the same lan-
628 [438] guage and have the same tribal tattooing. They live in peaceful relations with the Karajá, they intermarry; above all, there is an active trade in which the Karajá trade to the Šavajé stone tools, which the Šavajé lack, as well as iron goods, fabrics, and chains of beads in exchange for urucú, net coverings, araras, and
511 food. In clothing and ornamentation the Šavajé are supposed to be equal to the Karajá, but to have much more beautiful things. Among the Karajá, they are considered rich in ornaments and foodstuffs; hence, in times of hardship, the Karajá often migrate over to them. I found these statements to be generally true.

101 Phonetically the name of the people should be written Šăvăjé, in accordance with the pronunciation customary among the Karajá. The Karajá also call them: (ĭ)šăndjŭ, (ĭ)šă(n)dĭwăndŭ.
361 [114] [161] [162] I cannot give their number, because I became acquainted with only a small village of five huts. In any case, besides three or four such small villages, there seems to be a very large village, similar to those of the Šambioá, so that the number may perhaps be given as 800-1000. The Šavajé living among the southern Karajá perhaps reach 50 in number.

Brazil.

Both sexes have a blue ring tattooed under the eye, forming a deep ugly scar, which is the special distinguishing mark of the tribe. 304 619

The Karayá take good care of the body, bathing many times each day—though this is more to cool and refresh themselves, and for sport—keep the hair well combed, and pull out the sparse beard. They formerly used the teeth of the piránha fish as a kind of saw with which to cut the hair, but they now have scissors. 515 302 412 237

As already stated, the men wear no clothing, or covering whatever. The sash, or apron, worn by the women, is made of the inner bark of the jangáda tree. It is prepared for use by first soaking it a day or two in water, then pounding it with flat stones, and finally drying it. When the wearer of this primitive apron sits, she passes it back between the limbs and sits upon it. Besides this costume, both sexes wear various armlets, wristlets and leglets, as ornaments, which are peculiar to each division of the tribe. Soon after birth, the child's wrists and legs below the knees, are adorned with broad bands made by weaving together cotton cordage on the limbs themselves; while a black cotton band girts the body as a bandage. When the infant is a few months old, these articles are removed, and broad cotton wristlets, leglets and anklets are woven on the limbs, a tassel of cotton cords being attached to the leglets. The boys wear the leglets, or garterlets, until the lip is pierced, while the girls wear them until married. The wristlets worn by adults, cover nearly the whole forearm. They are not put aside until after marriage, and many females wear them until the first child is born. When one of the couple dies, the survivor puts the wristlets on again. This custom has come down from the ancients. As the wristlets and leglets are usually woven on the limbs themselves, they cannot be removed without being cut off. For this reason, they are never removed, nor washed until finally thrown aside. But I found the Karayá quite ready to cut these articles off and give them to me in exchange for some articles I had which took their fancy. 291 [287] 301 [184] [283] [286] [437] [439]